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NFAC #2356-81

## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

SP - 103/81  
22 April 1981  
Copy 2MEMORANDUM FOR: Hal Ford  
Associate Chairman, National Intelligence CouncilFROM: [REDACTED] 25X1  
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for Strategic  
ProgramsSUBJECT: "Observations on the Impact of Uncertainty in Strategic  
Analysis," by Stanley Sienkiewicz

1. On the evaluation scale listed in your request to review the subject article I would rate it as "No 3. familiar stuff, repackaged." But I would quickly add that the "stuff" of the article is of sufficient importance that it is a worthy piece--even if it educates only one more policymaker about the uncertainties in the arcane arithmetic of the US-USSR strategic balance. The author's categorization of uncertainties into operational uncertainties and force planning uncertainties may even be regarded as innovative by some policymakers who lack extensive experience in measuring the strategic balance. In short, the author's basic thesis is not only one that we accept but one that officials of the new Administration should appreciate fully as they come to deal with US strategic force planning issues. [REDACTED] 25X1

2. We too need constant reminders about the uncertainties in measures of the relationship in strategic nuclear forces. In the fetish for brevity which seems to characterize some officials of the new Administration we are hard pressed to communicate important trends in Soviet strategic capabilities as well as our uncertainties about them. In general, however, the author has not cut any new ground in his article for those who have long been involved in devising and conducting exchange calculations and interpreting their results. In fact, there are few passages in the article with which we would disagree. For example,

--In calculations of US-USSR strategic force relationship the author underemphasizes the significance of uncertainties about US force plans. As demonstrated in a December 1979 study by Kevin Lewis and Bruce Bennett of the Rand Corporation, annual changes in US force planning in 1976, 1977 and 1978 caused major variations in projected measures of the US-USSR force relationship in 1989. US forces in 1989

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projected in 1977 were 45 percent less capable than those projected in 1976. US forces projected in 1978 were about 35 percent more capable in 1989 than those projected in 1977. Such a wide variation could span the US planners entire range of happiness.

--Similarly, the author states that in numbers, yields and accuracies of Soviet weapons our uncertainties are not very great. On the contrary, the combination of these uncertainties can be significant depending on what is being measured.

--Also, the author asserts that our analysis of US-USSR force interactions are almost always for future forces, almost never for current forces. While it is true that most exchange calculations seek to measure trends in future force relationships, the most extensive, most detailed and operationally the most valid inter-action analyses are done semiannually for current forces.

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3. These and several other technical parts of the article do not in our view detract from its main thesis, however. For a new guy on the block wanting to know how to think about exchange calculations of US-USSR strategic forces, I believe the article would be very useful reading.

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